

JANUARY 20, 1976

JAPAN AND THE SOVIET UNION: THE GROMYKO VISIT
(REISCHAEUR AND HINTON INTERVIEWS)

ANNCR:

SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER ANDREI GROMYKO WAS IN TOKYO LAST WEEK FOR TALKS WITH JAPANESE LEADERS ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES. BY JAPANESE ACCOUNTS, THE VISIT FAILED TO RESOLVE ANY IMPORTANT POLICY DISPUTES BETWEEN TOKYO AND MOSCOW. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN DISCUSSED THE GROMYKO VISIT WITH TWO PROMINENT AMERICAN SCHOLARS IN ASIAN AFFAIRS, AND HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR VIEWS.

VOICE:

JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER KIICHI MIYAZAWA MET WITH THE PRESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TALKS WITH MISTER GROMYKO AND ANNOUNCED THAT NO PROGRESS WAS MADE ON CONCLUDING A PEACE TREATY BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE SOVIET UNION TO BRING WORLD WAR TWO TO A FORMAL CLOSE. THE QUESTION OF THE RETURN TO JAPAN OF FOUR NORTHERN ISLANDS HELD BY THE SOVIET UNION, HE SAID, REMAINED UNRESOLVED. MISTER MIYAZAWA ALSO DISCLOSED THAT TOKYO HAS DECIDED TO CONCLUDE A PEACE TREATY WITH CHINA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BEFORE LEAVING TOKYO, MISTER GROMYKO WARNED THAT MOSCOW WOULD BE FORCED TO RECONSIDER ITS RELATIONS WITH JAPAN IF TOKYO AND PEKING SIGN A PEACE TREATY CONTAINING A CLAUSE THAT THE SOVIET UNION CONSIDERS ANTAGONISTIC. THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER WAS REFERRING TO A PEKING DEMAND THAT THE TREATY NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH JAPAN CONTAIN A PROVISION OPPOSING THE ATTEMPTS OF ANY NATION TO ACHIEVE "HEGEMONY" (DOMINANCE) IN ASIA.

PROFESSOR EDWIN REISCHAUER OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND A FORMER AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN HAD SEVERAL COMMENTS. HE SAID THAT THE SPEED WITH WHICH JAPANESE OFFICIALS PUBLICLY COMMENTED ON THE RESULTS OF THE GROMYKO VISIT AND THE IMMEDIATE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT TOKYO WOULD PROCEED WITH THE PEACE TREATY WITH CHINA INDICATES THAT THE GROMYKO TALKS HAD NOT GONE WELL.....THAT, IN FACT, THE VISIT COOLED SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS SOMEWHAT. THE JAPANESE, HE SAYS, SEEM TO BE HIGHLY IRRITATED AND THUS FEEL FREER PERHAPS TO DEVIATE IN THEIR STANDARD POLICY OF TRYING TO STEER A NEUTRAL COURSE IN RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA.

THE JAPANESE PEOPLE, PROFESSOR REISCHAUER OBSERVES, HAVE ALWAYS LEANED MORE TOWARD THE CHINESE SIDE. "CHINA," IN HIS WORDS, "IS WHERE THE EMOTIONS OF THE JAPANESE LIE....AND IT'S EASIER FOR THEM TO GO IN THAT DIRECTION." BUT THE JAPANESE, HE SAYS, HAVE BEEN VERY CORRECT IN TRYING NOT TO SHOW THIS. TOKYO'S IRRITATION WITH MOSCOW AT THIS TIME, HE BELIEVES, HAS PROMPTED THE JAPANESE TO DEPART FROM THEIR NORMAL PRACTICES. THEY ARE SHOWING THEIR FEELINGS A LITTLE BIT MORE AND ACTING A LITTLE BIT MORE DARING.

PROFESSOR REISCHAUER DOES NOT CONSIDER THE WORD "HEGEMONY" IN THE DRAFT SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY TO BE VERY MEANINGFUL TO THE JAPANESE, DESPITE MOSCOW'S OBJECTIONS TO THE WORD. PEKING, HE SAYS, HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT HAS IN MIND MOSCOW'S FOREIGN POLICY STANCE WHEN IT SPEAKS OF "HEGEMONY." BUT THE JAPANESE, HE SAYS, HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT THEY AND OTHER NATIONS DO NOT BELIEVE IN HEGEMONY ANYWHERE, AND THUS CAN TAKE THE WORD IN A MUCH MORE GENERAL MEANING THAN DO THE CHINESE.

FOREIGN OBSERVERS HAVE SPECULATED THAT CHINA'S GROWING CRUDE OIL EXPORTS TO JAPAN COULD IMPORTANTLY INFLUENCE JAPANESE POLICY IN FAVOR OF CHINA. PROFESSOR REISCHAUER AGREES THAT, WHILE CHINESE OIL HAS NOT COME ON IN SUFFICIENTLY LARGE QUANTITIES YET, IT COULD BE IMPORTANT IN JAPANESE THINKING ON THE FUTURE. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAYS, CHINESE OIL AT THE PRESENT TIME APPARENTLY LOOKS A LITTLE BIT MORE PROMISING AND IMPORTANT TO TOKYO THAN THE VARIOUS PROJECTS FOR DEVELOPING OIL AND NATURAL GAS IN SIBERIA.

PROFESSOR HAROLD HINTON OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY'S SINO-SOVIET INSTITUTE AGREES WITH OTHER OBSERVERS THAT THE GROMYKO VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A DEBACLE IN SOVIET DIPLOMACY. AND, LIKE OTHERS, HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND MOSCOW'S EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO THE "HEGEMONY" CLAUSE IN THE DRAFT SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO, HE NOTES, IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE CLAUSE APPEARS IN THE 1972 CHOU-TANAKA COMMUNIQUE ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND CHINA.

PROFESSOR HINTON QUESTIONS WHETHER THE JAPANESE ARE, IN FACT, VEERING FROM THEIR MIDDLE COURSE IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA. HE ADMITS, HOWEVER, THAT ON THE SURFACE, AT LEAST, IT LOOKS THAT WAY ... THAT JAPAN HAS OPTED TO STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH CHINA, EVEN AT THE RISK OF ALIENATING THE SOVIET UNION. TOKYO, HE SAYS, MAY REGARD THIS SHIFT IN POLICY AS A WAY OF EXERTING PRESSURE ON MOSCOW ON THE ISSUE OF THE DISPUTED NORTHERN ISLANDS. AND, IT'S UNLIKELY, PROFESSOR HINTON SAYS, THAT MOSCOW WILL WANT TO BE LEFT OUT OF THE PICTURE, WATCHING THE CHINESE AND JAPANESE BUILD AN ENTENTE.

IN ANY CASE, PROFESSOR HINTON DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT TOKYO IS DELIBERATELY SEEKING A CONFRONTATION WITH MOSCOW. NOR DOES HE BELIEVE THAT THE JAPANESE HAVE GIVEN UP ON THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDING COMMERCIAL TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND EVENTUALLY GAINING ACCESS TO SIBERIAN CRUDE OIL AND NATURAL GAS.

GH/PY/PBM